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The View From

(Army) Space ...

Ford (ARRST) versus Chevy (SSE)

By COL Bruce Smith

When I was a kid growing up, people were often defined by the cars they drove. There were basically two camps — Ford or Chevy. My father was a Chevy man; a series of Impalas graced our driveway over the years. My best friend's dad, on the other hand, liked Fords and had a number of Galaxie 500s before buying a vast yellow LTD Country Squire station wagon, complete with wood sides and a black vinyl roof. People loyally bought the same brand year after year and never dreamed of stepping into a rival showroom. Ford men were suspicious of any vehicle with a "bow tie" on it, while Chevy men looked on the "blue oval" with disdain. People were creatures of habit; driving what experience dictated. Today the Ford and Chevy rivalry has diminished somewhat, but a similar feud, or rivalry, is ongoing in the FA40 community.

Space Operations Officers often square off into two camps: the Army Space Support Team camp and the Space Support Element camp. Like the Ford-Chevy rivalry of old these two camps often look upon each other with suspicion or disdain.

"Who needs an Army Space Support Team? The Space Support Element can do anything an Army Space Support Team can do and it has the advantage of being organic on the division staff."

Conversely, "What does a Space Support Element do? It is not properly manned or equipped and is not linked into the 1st Space Brigade like an Army Space Support Team. The team brings Space expertise and capabilities to the warfighter that a Space Support Element never could!"

While I have exaggerated my comments, I have encountered these two distinct camps while working to develop future Space concepts and capabilities. Often the comments and the underlying perspectives are derived from the officer's past assignments. It has been my general experience that of-

ficers assigned to Army Space Support Teams value the team and recognize its contributions to the ongoing warfight, while the officers who have been assigned to the Space Support Element tend to favor the element. Only now are we beginning to have officers who are veterans of both Army Space Support Team and Space Support Element assignments. Often these officers see the value of both elements and recognize the potential of using both organizations in a collaborative method.

From the combat developer's perspective both Army Space Support Teams and Space Support Elements are necessary in today's Army as well as in the future formations we field. There is no argument or doubt that Space-based capabilities are becoming increasingly important to land component forces each year. As the full effects of fielding modular forces with new weapons is felt, Space support will assume increased importance, though it might not be readily apparent to the average Soldier. Yet that same Soldier will need Space-based capabilities including precision navigation and timing, satellite communications, Space-based imaging and missile warning, as well as, weather and environmental assessments. These Space-based capabilities must be planned and integrated into full spectrum operations and training. Space effects must be synchronized with the scheme of maneuver, as well as, in the concept of support in a well thought out and seamless fashion. Both the Army Space Support Teams and Space Support Elements are crucial to making this Space planning, integration and operational effectiveness possible.

Unlike the Ford-Chevy rivalry, in which each automobile company was a competitor, the Army Space Support Team and Space Support Elements are partners. Ideally they work together in full collaboration to provide tactical Space support to the warfighter. Although they have similar equipment and are manned by personnel who possess similar training



and expertise, the Army Space Support Team and the Space Support Element have different primary missions. These missions are related and complimentary, but they are different.

Space Support Elements are presently assigned to 10 Division headquarters and one Army headquarters. In addition the Army is in the process of fielding a Space Support Element to the XVIII Airborne Corps. Eventually each active and reserve Division, Corps and Army headquarters will have an organic Space Support Element. The Space Support Element is a staff element, which functions not unlike many other staff elements. As part of the organic staff, Space Support Elements plan, integrate, and coordinate global and theater Space capabilities to support their units' plans and operations. Additionally Space Support Elements serve as the commander's primary advisor on the capabilities, limitations, and availability of friendly, enemy and neutral Space assets.

The Space Support Element is an integral part of the staff and is directly involved in the staff planning process from the beginning. The element is responsible for identifying opportunities to employ Space Force Enhancement, or Space Control, and then coordinating for the required support. The Space Support Element participates in the staff planning process and the conduct of mission analysis to determine which Space-based capabilities are applicable to the particular operation and then coordinating and making recommendations for the allocation and utilization of Space support. The mission analysis performed by the Element forms the basis of the staff's Space running estimate as well as Annex N for all orders and plans.

On the other hand the Army Space Support Team is primarily responsible for the execution of tactical Space support, and production of related products. The Army Space Support Team complements the Space Support Element and often takes it direction from the element. Army Space Support Teams obtain or produce Space products, such as 3-D visualizations, satellite overflight reports, scintillation reports and imagery maps. Army Space Support Teams are also responsible for the continuous monitoring of the Space environment, including the operational status of Space vehicles, Space weather and

other Space events. Lastly, Army Space Support Teams have the ability to serve as Tier 1 missile warning nodes if required. In short, Army Space Support Teams are not a Ford or Chevy but rather the engine. The team is the task executor and capability provider.

Today we don't think much in terms of the Ford-Chevy rivalry. Both companies failed to adapt and evolve to the changing market; consequently their importance and impact have diminished. The Army cannot afford to make a similar mistake! Throughout the remainder of this decade, and into the next, the Army will continue to evolve, though our mission and responsibility to the nation will remain unchanged. The ongoing war, emerging threats, modular organizations, new equipment, and fiscal constraints will change the Army of today. Our operational capabilities will change as we change structure, manning and equipment. In this dynamic environment it is foolish to assume that Army Space Support Teams and Space Support Elements will remain static. Army Space Support Team and Space Support Element organizations, equipment and manning will evolve over this next decade to meet changing mission needs. We don't know exactly what each will look like, or be capable of, in 2015 but we do know that land component forces will still need tactical Space support. Army Space forces will continue to analyze, plan, integrate and employ Space-based capabilities in a holistic and seamless fashion in support of the warfighter. The capabilities that the Army Space Support Team and Space Support Elements bring to the fight today will be necessary in the future.

In summary, Space Operations Officers need to broaden their thinking concerning the teams and the elements. Army Space Support Teams and Space Support Elements are not competitors that bring redundant capabilities to the warfight. Rather they are complementary elements that work in a collaborative fashion in order to provide tactical Space support. Lastly, Space Operations Officers need to recognize that Army Space Support Teams and Space Support Elements are going to continue to evolve to meet changing mission requirements, but the unique skills and expertise that they bring to the warfight will still be in demand. 🌐